The River is the Answer
By David Cannamela

This year’s returns of salmon, steelhead and lamprey to the Snake River Basin leave no doubt that the four lower Snake River dams have had their predicted impact. This year’s abysmal runs, the worst in recorded history, drive home this reality: we are at high risk of losing our anadromous fish runs and the economy, ecology, and cultures they support. We must act quickly to save all this.

The solution is clear: Restore the river by removing the dams.

The biological cause and effect is not complicated: anadromous fish evolved in rivers and need what rivers provide to be successful. Dams turn rivers into not-rivers. In our case, the primary cause for decline is this: Smolts rely on the river’s flow for safe and efficient passage to the ocean. Dams kill that flow thereby eliminating a key element of the fishes’ life history. The migration corridor has been rendered ineffective and smolt mortality has increased to a level beyond which the runs can sustain themselves.

Thankfully, fish have a long memory and persistence. We just have to get out of their way. To find out more about getting involved with our salmon campaign, contact Zack Waterman.

Sierra Club fights Idaho Power’s anti-solar proposal
By Zack Waterman

In August Idaho Power asked the Public Utilities Commission for permission to place new net metering customers into a separate rate class. Net metering is a mechanism by which customers who self generate are compensated for surplus electricity pushed back to the grid. Idaho Power contends that because these customers are billed fewer kilowatt-hours monthly, they do not pay for their share of grid infrastructure.

Today there are approximately 1,500 solar net metering customers in Idaho Power’s service territory. These customers help offset the use of destructive fossil fuels and generate the most electricity when electricity demand peaks and market prices are a premium.

We strongly oppose Idaho Power’s proposal and have formally intervened in the regulatory proceeding.

Here’s our take:

- This proposal puts the “cart before the horse”. Solar and other distributed energy resources provide numerous benefits that must be understood and quantified before we create new customer classes or change net metering compensation.
- The proposal is discriminatory and singles out a small group of customers. There have always been different types of customers that cost more and less to serve yet pay the same rates, including rural and urban customers, folks with more and less efficient homes, people who use electric space heaters vs. those who do not, and others.
- Customers should have the right to reduce their energy consumption. Idaho’s burgeoning solar industry is good news for our environment and economy. Idaho Power’s move casts uncertainty into the marketplace and will stifle the growth of renewable energy.

Please speak up! You can help our efforts greatly by writing a quick letter to the Public Utilities Commission. Talking points and instructions can be found at www.sierraclub.org/idaho.

Support the Idaho Sierra Club

Your financial contribution means a lot to us. By supporting our Chapter, you support Sierra Club’s work in your own backyard. This makes you an essential part of Sierra Club’s efforts to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature. Choose to make a monthly gift or a single, meaningful contribution. Thank you!

Find out how you can give to the Idaho Chapter today by calling us at 208-384-1023 or visiting www.sierraclub.org/idaho.

Preserve the Future

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering Sierra Club in your will. There are many gift options available. We can even help plan your gift to your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

Sierra Club
Gift Planning Program
2101 Webster St #1300, Oakland, CA 94612
gift.planning@sierraclub.org; (800) 932-4270
Outings Updates

Box Canyon
By Harold Orien

Twenty miles northwest of Twin Falls, in the heart of Box Canyon, pristine water is released after a century-long journey beneath an arid lava landscape. The spring, the eleventh largest in the United States, is the best preserved spring of the thousand springs complex.

Recently the Sierra Club led an outing to visit this remarkable wild area. All who participated agreed that this is one of the best desert hikes near Boise.

The hike begins in a rather peculiar location at the edge of a cornfield. After a short walk past agricultural activities the trail enters the protected area. Immediately hikers are delighted with a view overlooking the Caribbean blue waters coming out of lava cliffs some 300 feet below. Trekkers must continue another 1/2 mile before the trail enters the lush canyon whose river runs at 650 cfs (about the same as the Boise river in winter).

At 1.5 miles we reach the point where the river plunges about 20 feet. (With mist from the falls hitting your face it’s easy to forget you are in the midst of the harsh Southern Idaho desert.) There is a nice platform for viewing the falls. The trail continues on for another mile. After lunch the hike back out is easy and scenic.

Rare Carnivore Monitoring
By Rich Rusnak

With our members support this winter we are continuing our camera monitoring work for the presence of rare carnivores on the Boise NF. With 4 cameras going all winter we hope to capture images of lynx and fisher, adding to the 5 species of predators, already documented. In 2016 a massive fire swept through our study area destroying known populations of Sacajawea’s Bitterroot an endangered plant and dramatically changing the landscape, including lynx habitat.

The importance of continuing this project is tied to dual factors, habitat resilience under the effects of climate change and further damage from mining. Across many scientific disciplines, habitat connectivity is recognized as an extremely important condition for providing longterm survivability of many species. The chapter is encouraged by recently released plans by IDOT to build 3 wildlife overpasses along highway 20 just west of Yellowstone NP, a migratory corridor, important for continental scale connectivity.

To follow our critter camera work see our FB page and website, if you wish to learn more and send comments to IDOT supporting the wildlife overpasses Alternative #2, see the following:

http://islandparkus20.com/helpful-resources/public-meeting-opportunities-materials/

Winter Wildlands Lecture Series

Idaho Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 S Walnut St, Trophy Room (enter from back of building) 7-8:30 pm

Thursday, January 25th
Landscape level conservation in Greater Yellowstone and Idaho’s High Divide: Join Idaho Richard Rusnak and Zack Waterman for a presentation and discussion on conservation opportunities in Idaho’s “High Divide” and Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. We will discuss the importance of these landscapes, ecosystem connectivity, bison restoration, and other efforts underway to protect some of the most iconic and intact ecosystems remaining in the Lower 48 states.

Thursday, February 22nd
Cumu mine proposal in the Boise River Watershed: Join Rich Rusnak and Zack Waterman to learn more about a proposed mega strip mine on the Boise National Forest. We will discuss the latest developments as well as ongoing efforts to monitor for rare carnivores and how you can get involved.

Outings in 2018!

We are busy planning our 2018 outings schedule, looking for a mix of fun, volunteer and advocacy related programs and places to visit.

We are talking about visiting our salmon spawning grounds in central Idaho, hiking through wilderness areas, exploring more of Boise’s beautiful reserves and soaking in our amazing hot springs. We are even hoping to plan some hound hikes for dogs and owners.

If you have any ideas for outings or are interested in leading outings yourself, contact us at casey.mattoon@sierraclub.org. The process of becoming a leader is very simple and the rewards are plentiful, Help us fulfill the Sierra Club mission of helping all folks explore and enjoy Idaho.
In December, Boise Weekly highlighted our Boise is Ready for 100 campaign in an article titled City of Boise Moves Toward 100 Percent Clean Energy. The article covers our campaign ask that the City of Boise include a 100% clean, renewable energy goal in their sustainability work.

Here in Boise, we know that to play our part in stopping climate change and transforming our energy system for a cleaner, more just, and affordable future -- it will take a clear vision of where we need to end up to guide the process and measure our progress. By setting such an ambitious goal, Boise can join the 50+ cities around the country that have established 100% clean as the final goal for their communities.

This vision of a 100% clean energy future is shared by thousands of Boise residents, faith leaders, nonprofits and businesses who have weighed in with us to make this ask of our city leaders.

In the article, our city leadership demonstrates that we’re on the same page when it comes to energy. We share the values of putting efficiency first, proving implementation, and prioritizing clean energy. We appreciate the steps our city is taking leading up to a commitment and recognize our role is to continue educating the public and find ways to provide a voice for the people.

For now the Boise Director of Public Works, Steve Burgos, indicated a loose timeline for an upcoming Renewable Energy Strategy the city has commissioned, which includes among other things the setting of a citywide clean energy goal.

"Burgos estimates a specific renewable energy strategy, already in the works, may be fully drafted as soon as next spring and ready to go before Mayor Bieter and the Boise City Council for approval by summer."

Now is the time to celebrate the elevation of clean energy as a priority for city leaders, thank them for taking these awesome steps to look seriously at implementation, and spread the work among our networks to amplify the message for a 100% clean energy future in Boise.

Contact casey.mattoon@sierraclub.org to get involved in this impactful, fun and urgent campaign!
Climate Justice League has Idaho’s Students Leading

On November 18th, student leaders from all four Boise high schools gathered in conjunction with sibling events around the country to mark the end of global negotiations for action to stop climate change in Bonn, Germany.

The United States was the only holdout for the climate talks as a result of President Trump’s decision earlier this year to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Accord. A central goal of the event was to signal to countries around the world, and leaders here in Idaho, that Idaho’s students are still committing to stopping climate change.

Students collected objects and letters from the crowd of 50 representing the things at risk from climate. The items were sealed in time capsules that won’t be opened for another 50 years after they are sent to be buried in Washington D.C. with capsules from around the nation.

“To put an item in the time capsule that represents our love for Idaho, or anything of significance to us, we acknowledge the importance of our time now,” said Theres Etoka, senior at Boise High School. “In 50 years, I want to be remembered as someone who spoke out, someone who stood up for what is right.”

The students came together to form the Idaho Climate Justice League, a group focused on increasing awareness about the impact of climate change and hold leaders accountable to protect Idaho’s climate for current and future generations. The students received support from Idaho leaders including Boise Mayor David Bieter, Boise School District Science Supervisor Chris Taylor, and Idaho State Representative Sue Chew.

“The truth is we are all gathered here to see an optimistic future,” said Jai Bansal, senior at Capital High School. “When my grandchildren open this thing up, in the better world that I believe will ultimately come to pass, they will find a range of emotions that are deeply, profoundly human. And that is what this fight is about.”

In December the students are headed to a grassroots organizing training in Atlanta, Georgia put on by the Sierra Student Coalition. A group of six will go with our Conservation Program Manager for a weekend of learning with students and facilitators from around the country. The goal is to come back with skills and trainings to help the students reach their 2018 goals: pass science standards with references to climate change and help Boise commit to 100% clean energy.

In 2016, the Idaho State Legislature removed five references to human caused climate change from the K-12 science standards. The Weather Channel called these the “least adequate science standards in the country with regard to climate change.” The students plan to lobby officials to change that and provide statewide access to equitable climate information. They also plan to ask Mayor Bieter and their Boise School District officials to adopt visionary clean energy goals to stop climate change, because the climate crisis requires both education and action!
Elections for Middle Snake Group Executive Committee Positions

All Sierra Club members in the Middle Snake Group are eligible to vote in this election and to run for a leadership position. Vote for four positions on the Middle Snake Group executive committee. Ballots must be received in the Boise Sierra Club office by January 21, 2018 to be counted. NOTE: Each member of a joint membership may vote, each using both of the two columns. Please tear off and mail this entire page to: Group Elections, Idaho Chapter Sierra Club, Ballots, P.O. Box 552, Boise, ID 83701

For Executive Committee (vote for 4):
Ben Losinski
Amy Lyons
Cinthya Herrera
Conner Jackson

Candidate Statements:

Ben Losinski
I have served on the Board of the Middle Snake Group for over a year and focused on building up our local outings program. I am a lover of the outdoors and an ardent supporter of our public lands. Idaho has so much to offer but often our state representatives take that for granted. I see the Idaho Chapter of the Sierra Club as our best opportunity to push for policy changes and social awareness. Please consider my candidacy to continue serving you on the Middle Snake Group Executive Committee.

Amy Lyons
As a nature enthusiast, sustainability manager, and active member of my community, I am excited to put forth my candidacy for a leadership position with the Middle Snake Group Executive Committee. Given my background in community outreach, brand management, program development, and sustainability, I feel I am an excellent candidate for this opportunity. I am eager to participate in the coordination and development of programming, activities, and campaigns designed to generate awareness of the values of MSG. With a passion for wildlife and land preservation, and strong beliefs in sustainability and renewable energy, I seek to help build and maintain a strong community and volunteer base through community outreach, content development for digital media, and public education. I wish to instigate conversation and action to protect and encourage the ecology that makes Idaho, and the pacific northwest such a cherished landscape. I desire to integrate and establish with the movement, creating the positive change to maintain a healthy and livable planet for all. I hope to gain your support to bring my talent to promote and provide awareness of current campaigns, sharing the joy of the natural world with youth and adults, and securing resources to promote sustainable development, open space protection, and clean energy in the face of economic development and population growth.

Cinthya Herrera
I am new to the environmental proactive world, but have always been involved in humanitarian activism and consider myself an environmentally conscious individual. I hope that my enthusiasm to learn and advocate for the protection, exploration, and enjoyment of the wild places on earth will inspire innovative ideas and unabashed questions to jump start positive changes in the state of Idaho. I am excited to be involved in issues that affect everyone in our community, and I am looking forward to vocally challenge all community members and leaders into action.

Conner Jackson
I grew up in Boise and am proud to call Idaho my home. I am rooted in an understanding of natural resources and various issues surrounding them. It is from this basis of understanding that I have come to appreciate the role that organizations like the Sierra Club serve in the community. In 2016, I received a degree in Environmental Studies with a focus in Conservation Biology from the College of Idaho. I have a writing background from my experience as an intern with Boise Weekly. I feel lucky to say that I have been a river guide on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River for five seasons. Working as a guide has given me the opportunity to educate the public about a place that I and so many others care much about. In the last year, I volunteered for the Sierra Club at the People’s Climate March and have been involved with efforts to conserve Idaho’s wild salmon and steelhead. More than anything, I want to help make sure that the next generation is afforded the same opportunity to recreate and appreciate Idaho’s wild lands and rivers that I have been.

Want to see what we have been up to lately?

We regularly update our blog about work we are doing with utilities, high school students, cities, national legislation, and even of our outdoor activities. Stay up to date with all of our amazing work by visiting www.sierraclub.org/idaho and get in the know!

MIDDLE SNAKE GROUP LEADERS

+ Indicates Chapter Executive Committee voting member

Group Chair
Jenna Duffin jennaduffin@gmail.com

Secretary
Ben Losinski benlo@live.com

Conservation Chair
Robert Spencer densob748@msn.com

Outings Chair
Casey Mattoon mattoocasey@gmail.com

CHAPTER STAFF

Chapter Director:
Zack Waterman
zack.waterman@sierraclub.org

Conservation Program Manager:
Casey Mattoon
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Follow us on social media:

A new Sierra Club report, Cities Are Ready for 100% Clean Energy, highlights 10 cites in the U.S. that have committed in 2017 to begin a transition to 100% clean energy.

Our local Ready for 100 Campaign used the report to get some media attention and highlight great work being done by the City of Boise. We will continue to work with city leaders they move towards a clean energy commitment in the summer of 2018 to make sure the inclusion of a 100% goal to guide the work for an equitable transition to clean energy for all.

Learn more: www.sierraclub.org/idaho
Wild and Scenic Film Festival

By Jenna Duffin

We're happy to announce we will once again be hosting the Wild & Scenic Film Festival on January 5th, 2018 at the Egyptian Theatre in Boise, ID. Just like last year we will have two separate programs, Wild Child and the Wild & Scenic Film Festival.

Wild Child is our all-ages youth centered show that begins at 4:30pm (doors at 4). This hour long program is full of inspirational films to engage youth in conservation issues. A great way to get kids out of the house during a long school vacation and help raise the next generation of conservation leaders. Give the gift of tickets to your children, grandchildren, or any kids in your life! ($5 online and at the door)

The Wild & Scenic Film Festival begins at 7pm (doors at 6). This program features 11 truly incredible adventure and conservation films. We are so excited about the lineup of films this year and cannot wait for you all to experience them with us at this fun and informative event. ($12 advanced tickets, $15 at the door)

BUY DISCOUNTED EARLY BIRD TICKETS TODAY: https://www.sierraclub.org/idaho

If you have questions about the Wild & Scenic Festival or would like to help by volunteering the day of the film festival for the Idaho Chapter, contact me at jennaduffin@gmail.com.